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REL TO USA GBR FRA DEU

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TAGS: [PBTS](#) [MOPS](#) [PREL](#) [NI](#) [CM](#)
SUBJECT: NIGERIA:BAKASSI UPDATE

REF: ABUJA 1841 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Thomas P. Furey for Reasons 1.4 (b and d)

¶1. (C/REL USA GBR FRA DEU) On 24 July, Post hosted a meeting of the local representatives of the four witness states to the Greentree Accord on Bakassi, though the German embassy was unable to send anyone. No representatives from either the UK or France have yet traveled to the Bakassi area. The French concurred that there was history of abuse by Cameroonian gendarmes, and believed that concerns about the welfare of Bakassi indigenes were justified. All agreed that it was important for the witness states to continue to make a visible show of interest in the implementation of the agreement.

Military

¶2. (C/REL USA GBR FRA DEU) COL Wahab, the Principal Staff Officer (PSO) to Nigeria's Chief of Defense Staff (CDS), informed PolMilOff on 19 July that the CDS was flying to Bakassi that day to witness/oversee the initial Nigerian military withdrawal from Bakassi. The PSO said that the withdrawal process would begin with "non-essential" troops, but he did not elaborate.

¶3. (C/REL USA GBR FRA DEU) The French DATT said that there were "strong indications" that Nigerian troops had begun to move out of Bakassi on 20 July, but expressed concern that the Nigerian Army would be unable to move their larger artillery pieces until after the rainy season. His counterpart in Yaounde confirmed that Cameroonian troops were reporting that Nigerian units began to withdraw from Bakassi on 20 July, and also that Nigerian units deployed in Bakassi cheered loudly enough to be heard on the Cameroonian side of the lines when the announcement was made that their mission was ending.

Ceremonies

¶4. (C/REL USA GBR FRA DEU) According to the PSO to the CDS, a formal event for the CDS of Nigeria to "hand over authority" over Bakassi to the CDS of Cameroon was being planned for 6 or 7 August in Bakassi, to be followed two days later by a similar event with Presidents Obasanjo and Biya. The PSO would speak to the Nigerian MFA and DIA about ensuring invitations were extended to representatives of the witness states.

¶5. (C/REL USA GBR FRA DEU) The French DATT and PolCouns had also heard there would be two ceremonies, one on 5 August in Archibong with the Defense Chiefs and one on 10 August in Calabar with the two presidents. The British DCM also had heard those dates. The Nigerian Director of Military Intelligence, on 24 July, had a "JTF Withdrawal from Bakassi" event marked on his calendar for 10 August.

Local Reaction

¶6. (C/REL USA GBR FRA DEU) Nigerian press reports continue to cover Bakassi, with stories increasingly focused on the sensational--calls for secession, death threats against political leaders, and last-ditch efforts to nullify the Greentree Accord. Some press reports and Embassy contacts have questioned the legality of the Greentree Accord, expressing a desire for the National Assembly to consider the agreement before it is implemented. Bakassi's LGA chair has been quoted by the press delivering moderating messages, supporting the relocation program and downplaying secessionist messages.

FUREY